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INTERROGATION REPORT

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COUNTRY : SOUTH VIETNAM (SVN) NIC REPORT NO : 308/68
SUBJECT : Preparation for and Attack on NHA TRANG NIC CASE NO : FET
DATE OF INFO : 11 January to 30 January 1968 DATE OF REPORT: 13/3/68
DATE AND PLACE : 29 Febraury 1968 (F - U) NO. OF PAGES : 3
OF ACQUISITION : NHA TRANG, Vietnam REF: NIC Report 294/68 (PIR)

This report was collected by a NIC Field Exploitation Team on 29 February 1968 in NHA TRANG City, KHANH HOA Province, SVN. Source is not available at the NIC for further exploitation.

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SUMMARY

LAO DONG Youth Group members of Company 1, Battalion 7, Regiment 18B, Division 325, were informed on 22 January 1968 that NHA TRANG would be attacked but details were not provided. The Company began to march toward NHA TRANG on 22 January. On 28 January company personnel were informed that the attack would take place at 2400 hours, 29 January 1968. The company reached its objectives without difficulty but was unable to take them and withdrew at 0700 hours, 30 January.

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1. The first indication that Source had that his unit Company 1, Battalion 7, Regiment 18B, Division 325, would be involved in an attack during the TET holidays occurred on 11 January 1968. On that day all LAO DONG Party members in the company were called together for a meeting and based on past experience, the holding of such a meeting meant that the unit was shortly to be involved in an attack. The following day (12 January 1968) Source and other members of the LAO DONG Youth Group in Company 1 were summoned to a meeting and informed that the Company would attack NHA TRANG. No details, such as date or objectives were provided.
2. The details for the attack were revealed to Company 1 personnel in the following way: (1) On 11 January 68 company Party members held a meeting; (2) On 12 January LAO DONG Youth Group members were called to a meeting and informed that the company would attack NHA TRANG; (3) On 16 January the company Military/Civilian Council held a meeting and all remaining company personnel were informed that NHA TRANG would be attacked; (4) On 18 January company squad leaders were called together and unit objectives were identified (NHA TRANG Radio and Transformer Stations) and located on a map for them; (5) On 19 January squad leaders met with their individual squads and discussed their missions; (6) On 20 January the company had a "Jubilation Ceremony" and the company commander, four squad leaders, and two reconnaissance personnel went to NHA TRANG to reconnoiter company objectives; (7) On 21 January all company personnel cleaned and checked their weapons and equipment; (8) On 22 January personnel were issued a twelve-day supply of rice and held a departure ceremony at which everyone took an oath to fight without fear of death. At this time the company departed from BA CUM, KHANH HOA Province for NHA TRANG.
3. Travel to NHA TRANG was on foot during daylight hours through forested areas. Personnel were fed by people living in villages that were passed along the way. On the night of 28 January the company arrived outside NHA TRANG and was rejoined by the personnel who had gone to reconnoiter the company objectives. These personnel went over the unit mission and informed the unit personnel of the approach route they would use to the objectives. It was at this time that the unit personnel were informed that they would attack at 2400 hours, 29 January.
4. Sixty-two personnel were assigned to Company 1 at the time of the attack. This figure included 15 replacements that had been assigned to the company two or three days before departure from the BA CUM Area. All personnel were NVA personnel. No local force personnel were assigned. Local force personnel of BA CUM were to remain in the area and act as a security force.
5. The company reached its objectives and attacked at 2400 hours, 29 January. Because the company commander and the other above mentioned personnel reconnoitered the approach, the company had no difficulty in reaching its objectives. Once reached however, they could not be taken because of strong GVN defenses. By 0700 hours, 30 January 1968 the company had lost two men killed and one wounded and was ordered to withdraw from NHA TRANG.
6. Because the unit did not capture its objectives the Source considered the attack to be a failure. This fact made him think that no other VC unit attacking NHA TRANG had succeeded either because his was a much praised, elite unit that was most apt to succeed. Source became convinced that the company would not take its objectives within two or three hours after the attack started because, not yet taken, the arrival of reinforcements would preclude such an event.

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7. Unit morale was high prior to and during the attack and no change was observed at the time the Source rallied. Morale was high because personnel believed that the attack would lead to ultimate victory in the near future. Prior to notification of the attack on NHA TRANG many of the unit personnel were in a low state of morale and tired of the war because of the hardships they had to endure.
8. Source believed that the VC would re-attack SVN cities because they said they would take over the cities. He said that once the Communists say that they will do something, they will not cease their efforts until they have succeeded. He believed that replacements would be sent to the initial attack units from the GIA LAI Province area (his political officer said new NVA infiltration groups were located there) and that when they arrived, a new attack would take place soon after. Source said that any future attack could be predicted by watching VC units for a schedule of events similar to that given in paragraph 2, above. He said that all attacks are preceded by those events.

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